

Subject: English III Honors

Topic: *Julius Caesar*

Title of Lesson: History Repeats Itself

Objectives:

1. Students will draw similarities between primary source texts *The Final Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth* and *Julius Caesar* (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.8, E3-2.2)
2. Students will collaborate in order to create their own ‘Wanted’ posters for Brutus and the rest of the conspirators in Julius Caesar’s murder, similar to the ‘Wanted’ Poster for John Wilkes Booth. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4, E3-2.4)
3. Students will use their own experiences and understanding of historical texts write biographical accounts of their own lives. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.C, E3-5.2)
4. Students will participate in class discussion and make inferences based on *Julius Caesar* and *The Final Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth* (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B)

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson in particular is to show students that where there is power, there is betrayal, and that this does not change with the times. *Julius Caesar* is considered one of Shakespeare’s tragedies, but it is also a historical play. Students will be able to draw similarities between the death of Caesar and other assassinations in American history, namely Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, and use their knowledge to draw similarities between John Wilkes Booth and Brutus. Students will be able to think critically about historical references and come to realize that often times, history repeats itself.

Materials:

- The Final Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth (25)
- Wanted Poster for John Wilkes Booth (25)

- History Channel Video: John Wilkes Booth Wanted Poster
- Reader Response Journals (25)
- Pens & Pencils
- White board (1)
- Poster Board (25)
- Markers

Procedures:

Procedures for *Introducing* the Lesson:

Students will enter the classroom and get their reader response journal. The prompt will be written on the board:

5. Can you think of any moments in history that mirror what is happening in *Julius Caesar*?
6. What are some famous assassinations that you have heard of?

Students will have 5 minutes to work on their prompts, during which time I will walk around the room and check in with them and hand out *The Final Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth* and a copy of his 'Wanted' poster. After a few minutes, we will join together in a class discussion. One thing that I wish to point out to the students in particular is that Shakespeare actually coined the term assassination. We will segue into our next activity by taking about *Julius Caesar* as a biographical text. While it is considered a tragedy, it is based off of true events. The text that we will be dealing with today in class will be a primary source document, something that students should all be familiar with from Social Studies classes.

(7 minutes)

Procedures for *Developing* the Lesson:

I will ask the class if they remember who John Wilkes Booth was and what he did to be remembered in history (this will help students to recall information learned in history classes.)

We will speak for a few minutes about who he was and I will show the following clip:

<http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/john-wilkes-booth/videos/john-wilkes-booth-wanted-poster>

This video does a good job of outlining who exactly John Wilkes Booth was and is a great introduction into our reading for the day.

(5 minutes)

At this point we will turn to our text, *The Final Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth* and I will read the text aloud. After we read, I will ask for a few initial responses to the text. After some discussion, I will ask the class why they think we are reading this text today. The reason of course, is the rather obviously allusion that Booth makes to Brutus. I will have the students pair up and outline the similarities and differences that they believe are inherent in both Brutus and Booth. They will have a 5 minutes to discuss this, during which time I will walk around the room and monitor their discussion, asking questions and telling them to dig a little deeper. I will also take this time to hand out poster board and markers. We will come together as a class and create a Venn Diagram of similarities and differences. Which crime was worse? Brutus killed his friend and Booth killed the president. I am excited to hear these responses because they play directly into the theme of betrayal that we have talked about in class. Is it worse to betray your friend? Or your country? Or both?

(15 minutes)

To segue, we will talk about the reward that is on Booth's 'Wanted' poster. How much would you give as a reward to have Brutus returned to you? (This is a little outside the realm of the play now, we will have to toy with the idea that Brutus fled as soon as he killed Caesar.)

Then, we will start our final assignment. Students will be grouped by head count into groups of 5. Each group will create their own wanted poster for Brutus (and his co-conspirators) listing their crimes, acceptable punishment, and reward. It will also contain a description of the suspect, much like the Booth poster does. We will work on these posters until the end of class.

(15-20 minutes)

Procedures for **Concluding** the Lesson:

I will conclude the lesson by asking the students to hand in their 'Wanted' posters to me as exit slips when they are finished. If we need more time to complete them we will do so next class. They will be hung up in the classroom and we will look through them as a class when they are complete. I will then introduce our homework assignment, which is adapted from Figure 9-4 in Milner & Milner's *Bridging English*. (Milner, 287) Writing their own biographies will teach students to appreciate non-fiction by making them a part of it themselves. Homework assignment is attached below.

(5 minutes)

Evaluating/Assessing the Learning:

During the lesson: I will constantly be walking around the room, looking for students who are doing exceptional work, as well as working to keep other students on track.

Students who participate in journal prompts and discussions will receive a full participation point for the day.

After the lesson: Students who hand in their 'Wanted' posters to me as exit slips will be given 0.5 participation points for the day. Students who complete the homework assignment will be given the other 0.5 upon completion. This ensures that there will be day to day participation, not simply participation in class.

Student Living in Poverty:

- Student will be given ample notice of deadlines
- Student will be offered extra help on assignments given
- Student will be offered use of school technology to type assignment. If student prefers to work from home and shows the capability to do so, I will allow the student to hand write the paper, so long as their handwriting is legible.

Student with a Physical Challenge:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- Aside from general accommodations listed, I will ensure that any group work done will take into account that the student does not have to move from their seat--unless they wish to do so and it is within their physical ability.

English Language Learner:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- ELL student will be given copies of all handouts and rubric in their native language.
- Student will also be given a copy of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in their native language. Group discussion will help student to become more comfortable speaking English with their classmates.

High Achieving Student:

- Please see general accommodations.

At Risk Student:

- Student will receive physical copies of all handouts.
- Student will have a chance to interact with classmates during group and partner work
- Student will have the chance to reflect on their own opinions, making the material more interesting.
- Whole class discussion will enable student to feel heard, especially creatively.

Student on the Autism Spectrum:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- See general accommodations.

Homework Assignment

Write your own biography! Answer the following questions as you write:

1. If your life were a biography, what would you want to be remembered for?
2. Why would someone want to write a book about you?
3. What was the happiest period in your life?
4. What was the most difficult situation you have ever faced?
5. Tell me about a turning point in your life.
6. What is your source of motivation?
7. Who was a very influential person in your life?
8. Describe the end of your life.

You can add more information about your family, yourself, the things that drive you etc., just be sure that you are very specific. Pay attention to the details here! You would never see a biography about Martin Luther King Jr. that said, "He went to some steps and said some things to some people and inspired them."

Biographies will vary in length, but I want to see some effort here! This is only being graded as a homework assignment, but if you do not put forth some effort you will not receive full credit. Assignments will be due tomorrow at the start of class.



SURRAT.



BOOTH.



HAROLD.

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,



\$100,000 REWARD!

THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,
IS STILL AT LARGE.

\$50,000 REWARD

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURRATT, one of Booth's accomplices.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of David C. Harold, another of Booth's accomplices.

LIBERAL REWARDS will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above-named criminals, or their accomplices.

All persons harboring or secreting the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murder of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a Military Commission and the punishment of DEATH.

Let the stain of innocent blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers.

All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience charged with this solemn duty, and rest neither night nor day until it be accomplished.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

DESCRIPTIONS.—BOOTH is Five Feet 7 or 8 inches high, slender build, high forehead, black hair, black eyes, and wears a heavy black moustache.

JOHN H. SURRAT is about 5 feet, 9 inches. Hair rather thin and dark; eyes rather light; no beard. Would weigh 145 or 150 pounds. Complexion rather pale and clear, with color in his cheeks. Wore light clothes of fine quality. Shoulders square; cheek bones rather prominent; chin narrow; ears projecting at the top; forehead rather low and square, but broad. Parts his hair on the right side; neck rather long. His lips are firmly set. A slim man.

DAVID C. HAROLD is five feet six inches high, hair dark, eyes dark, eyebrows rather heavy, full face, nose short, hand short and fleshy, feet small, instep high, round bodied, naturally quick and active, slightly closes his eyes when looking at a person.

NOTICE.—In addition to the above, State and other authorities have offered rewards amounting to almost one hundred thousand dollars, making an aggregate of about **TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.**

After John Wilkes Booth was shot at Garrett's farm on April 26, 1865, Colonel Everton Conger removed a small red appointment book from Booth's body. The book, which served as Booth's diary, contained a final diary entry, written after the April 14 assassination:

Until today nothing was ever thought of sacrificing to our country's wrongs. For six months we had worked to capture, but our cause being almost lost, something decisive and great must be done. But its failure was owing to others, who did not strike for their country with a heart. I struck boldly, and not as the papers say. I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends, was stopped, but pushed on. A colonel was at his side. I shouted Sic semper before I fired. In jumping broke my leg. I passed all his pickets, rode sixty miles that night with the bone of my leg tearing the flesh at every jump. I can never repent it, though we hated to kill. Our country owed all her troubles to him, and God simply made me the instrument of his punishment. The country is not what it was. This forced Union is not what I have loved. I care not what becomes of me. I have no desire to outlive my country. The night before the deed I wrote a long article and left it for one of the editors of the National Intelligencer, in which I fully set forth our reasons for our proceedings. He or the gov'r-

After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night being chased by gunboats till I was forced to return wet, cold, and starving, with every man's hand against me, I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for. What made Tell a hero? And yet I, for striking down a greater tyrant than they ever knew, am looked upon as a common cutthroat. My action was purer than either of theirs. One hoped to be great himself. The other had not only his country's but his own, wrongs to avenge. I hoped for no gain. I knew no private wrong. I struck for my country and that alone. A country that groaned beneath this tyranny, and prayed for this end, and yet now behold the cold hands they extend to me. God cannot pardon me if I have done wrong. Yet I cannot see my wrong, except in serving a degenerate people. The little, the very little, I left behind to clear my name, the Government will not allow to be printed. So ends all. For my country I have given up all that makes life sweet and holy, brought misery upon my family, and am sure there is no pardon in the Heaven for me, since man condemns me so. I have only heard of what has been done (except what I did myself), and it fills me with horror. God, try and forgive me, and bless my mother. Tonight I will once more try the river with the intent to cross. Though I have a greater desire and almost a mind to return to Washington, and in a measure clear my name - which I feel I can do. I do not repent the blow I struck. I may before my God, but not to man. I think I have done well. Though I am abandoned, with the curse of Cain upon me, when, if the world knew my heart, that one blow would have made me great, though I did desire no greatness. Tonight I try to escape these bloodhounds once more. Who, who can read his fate? God's will be done. I have too great a soul to die like a criminal. Oh, may He, may He spare me that, and let me die bravely. I bless the entire world. Have never hated or wronged anyone. This last was not a wrong, unless God deems it so, and it's with Him to damn or bless me. As for this brave boy with me, who often prays (yes, before and since) with a true and sincere heart - was it crime in him? If so, why can he pray the same?

I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, but 'I must fight the course.' 'Tis all that's left to me.

WORKS CITED

1. Milner, Joseph O'Beirne, Lucy Floyd Morcock Milner, and Joan F. Mitchell. *Bridging English*. 5th ed. New York: Merrill, 1993. Print.
2. Shakespeare, William, and Susan P. Cerasano. *Julius Caesar*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012. Print.
3. "John Wilkes Booth Wanted Poster Video." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2014.
4. Wilkes Booth, John. "Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth." *Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2014.